

Message Text

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USDEL MTN GENEVA

UNCLAS STATE 240977

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ETRD, CACM, MTN

SUBJECT: TRADE POLICY TEAM CONSULTATIONS WITH CACM
COUNTRIES

1. SUMMARY--TRADE POLICY TEAM, LED BY DEPUTY SPECIAL TRADE
REPRESENTATIVE AMBASSADOR CLAYTON YEUTTER, MET WITH OFFI-
CIALS OF CENTRAL AMERICAN (CACM) COUNTRIES IN SAN JOSE ON
SEPTEMBER 8 TO EXCHANGE VIEWS ON THE MULTILATERAL TRADE
NEGOTIATIONS (MTN). MEETING WAS HOSTED BY GOOCR, WITH FOR-
EIGN MINISTER GONZALO FACIO SERVING AS PRESIDING OFFICER.
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CACM DEL GAVE THEIR PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF U.S. REQUEST
FOR CONTRIBUTIONS IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS (TP) NEGOTIATIONS
AND RAISED A NUMBER OF BILATERAL ECONOMIC ISSUES. END
SUMMARY.

2. MEETING WAS OPENED BY PRESENTATION OF COSTA RICAN MINISTER OF ECONOMY, JORGE SANCHEZ MENDEZ, WHO SAID THAT CENTRAL AMERICAN COUNTRIES ARE WORKING IN ALL AVAILABLE FORA CONCERNED WITH TRADE, SEEKING TO IMPROVE THE EXPORT POSSIBILITIES OF THEIR WEAK ECONOMIES. CACM COUNTRIES WERE PLEASED TO PARTICIPATE IN MTN, THOUGH ONLY NICARAGUA IS A GATT MEMBER.

3. GOCR FOREIGN MINISTER FACIO MADE PRESENTATION IN WHICH HE POINTED TO DISCRIMINATORY ASPECTS OF LOME CONVENTION ON LATIN AMERICA'S EXPORTS TO THE EC. HE ASKED THAT THE U.S. USE ITS INFLUENCE TO CONVINCE THE EC TO EXTEND TO LATIN AMERICA ALL OF LOME'S BENEFITS. FACIO RECALLED HE HAD ASKED SECRETARY KISSINGER AT OAS GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN JUNE TO STUDY POSSIBILITY OF REGIONAL PREFERENCES FOR LA COUNTRIES. HE CONCLUDED THAT IF IT DEVELOPED THERE WAS NO WAY TO REMEDY EC DISCRIMINATION AGAINST LA EXPORTS IN LOME, THEN HE BELIEVED LA WOULD HAVE NO OTHER CHOICE THAN TO SEEK REGIONAL PREFERENCES FROM THE U.S., NOTING THIS WOULD BE A TOPIC AT THE PROPOSED SPECIAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE OAS TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT QUESTIONS. FACIO ALSO MENTIONED COSTA RICAN CONCERN THAT LEGISLATION IN U.S. CONGRESS TO ELIMINATE 807 DRAWBACK PROVISIONS COULD HAVE SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON COSTA RICAN CLOTHING INDUSTRY.

4. YEUTTER SAID U.S. DID NOT FAVOR REGIONAL TARIFF PREFERENCES, NOTING THAT LOME ARRANGEMENTS HAD ORIGINATED IN SPECIAL HISTORICAL RELATIONSHIPS, AND THAT PROBLEMS OF MANY LOME COUNTRIES WERE VERY MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THOSE OF LA COUNTRIES WHICH WERE INTERESTED IN EXPANDING THEIR MARKETS WORLDWIDE. HE NOTED THAT LOME COUNTRIES GENERALLY ARE VERY POOR, AND HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON LOME PREFERENCES. HE SAID THE U.S. HAD DISCUSSED LOME WITH EC ON MANY OCCASIONS, AND WOULD PREFER THAT ALL SYSTEMS OF TRADE DISCRIMINATION BE ELIMINATED. AS ONE METHOD OF MEETING LA UNCLASSIFIED

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TRADE NEEDS, HE NOTED U.S. HAD PROPOSED A PROCEDURE IN TARIFFS GROUP THROUGH WHICH LA COUNTRIES AND OTHER LDCS COULD NOTIFY PRODUCTS OF INTEREST TO THEM FOR SPECIAL AND DIFFERENTIAL TREATMENT IN THE TARIFFS NEGOTIATION, INCLUDING DEEPER-THAN-FORMULA MFN TARIFF REDUCTIONS.

5. CA DELEGATIONS THEN GAVE U.S. DEL WRITTEN PRESENTATION OF THEIR VIEWS ON THE MTN, INCLUDING NEGOTIATIONS IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS, WHICH THEY SAID WOULD FORMALLY BE PRESENTED IN GENEVA. DOCUMENT INCLUDED ANALYSIS OF U.S. TROPICAL PRODUCTS (TP) OFFER AND TRADE VALUES OF "CONTRIBUTIONS" THAT U.S. WAS SEEKING FROM CACM. CACM DELS IN REFERRING TO THEIR DOCUMENT NOTED THAT U.S. HAD INCLUDED

IN ITS TP OFFER LIST ONLY SOME ELEVEN OF THE SIXTY PRODUCTS ON THE CACM REQUEST LIST. THEY ALSO NOTED THAT PRINCIPAL TRADE VALUE OF USTP OFFER CONSISTED OF OFFER TO ELIMINATE 0.2 PERCENT TARIFF ON INEDIBLE MOLASSES, WHICH THEY DID NOT BELIEVE WAS A LEVEL OF TARIFF THAT HINDERED TRADE. GIVEN THE ACTUAL ECONOMIC SITUATION OF THE CACM COUNTRIES, WHICH HAD SUFFERED FROM RECURRING NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS HURRICANES AND EARTHQUAKES, IT WAS THEIR OPINION THAT

THEY SHOULD NOT BE ASKED TO MAKE SPECIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS AT THIS STAGE OF THE NEGOTIATIONS. THEY NOTED THAT REDUCTIONS IN CACM COMMON EXTERNAL TARIFF WOULD REQUIRE APPROVAL BY FIVE LEGISLATURES, WHICH WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO OBTAIN GIVEN THE "MARGINAL" VALUE OF THE USTP OFFER TO CACM. CACM COUNTRIES ALSO NOTED THAT IF THEY MADE CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE U.S., THEY WOULD BE SUBJECT TO REQUESTS FOR ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM OTHER DCS.

6. AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED U.S. RATIONALE FOR PREPARATION OF MFN OFFER IN TP NEGOTIATIONS, AS CONTRASTED TO OFFERS OF JAPAN AND THE EC WHICH HAVE A GSP ORIENTATION. HE EMPHASIZED THAT U.S. HAD A COMMITMENT TO THE CONGRESS AND PRIVATE SECTOR TO OBTAIN SOME MEASURE OF CONTRIBUTIONS IN ORDER TO MAKE MFN TARIFF REDUCTIONS. HE OBSERVED THAT

IF LDCS WISH TO WAIT UNTIL END OF NEGOTIATIONS TO MAKE THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS, U.S. WOULD EITHER HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL THEN TO IMPLEMENT ITS TP OFFER, OR SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCE ITS UNCLASSIFIED

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TP OFFER TO ELIMINATE NEED FOR CONTRIBUTIONS. HE NOTED U.S. TRADE FIGURES DIFFER SUBSTANTIALLY FROM THOSE PREPARED BY SIECA SECRETARIAT, ESPECIALLY AS CONCERNS VALUE OF PRODUCTS ON WHICH U.S. IS SEEKING CONTRIBUTIONS, AND SAID U.S. MTN DEL IN GENEVA WOULD BE PLEASED TO CONTINUE DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH CACM DELEGATIONS CONCERNING TRADE VALUES INVOLVED. (IN SUBSEQUENT SIDE CONVERSATION WITH SIECA SECRETARIAT OFFICIALS, IT WAS ESTABLISHED THAT CACM DID NOT HAVE SEPARATE TARIFF CATEGORIES FOR IMPORTS OF VEGETABLE PROTEINS AND EDIBLE SOY FLOUR MIXES, AND HENCE HAD INCLUDED TOTAL VALUES OF ALL IMPORTS OF SOY BEANS, WHEAT FLOUR, ETC., IN ITS CALCULATION OF VALUES OF CONTRIBUTIONS U.S. IS SEEKING FROM CACM IN TP NEGOTIATIONS.)

7. GOCR DEL MENTIONED PROBLEM OF COMPETITIVE NEED EXCLUSION FROM GSP OF TSUS 137.75, CHAYOTE, IN WHICH COSTA RICA WITH 1974 EXPORTS OF \$123,000 HAD 76 PERCENT OF U.S. MARKET AND INQUIRED AS TO THE POSSIBILITIES FOR ENDING THIS EXCLUSION. GOCR AND OTHER DELEGATIONS ALSO RAISED POSSIBILITY OF LIBERALIZATION OF COMPETITIVE NEED PROVISIONS APPLICABLE TO REGIONAL INTEGRATION GROUPS. AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED RATIONALE FOR COMPETITIVE NEED LIMITATIONS,

AND NOTED THAT THERE IS LITTLE POSSIBILITY OF LEGISLATIVE CHANGE IN GSP DURING REMAINDER OF 1976. THE U.S. IS, HOWEVER, WILLING TO RECEIVE SUGGESTIONS REGARDING POSSIBLE AMENDMENTS AT A LATER DATE. HE THEN INDICATED THAT CHAYOTE WAS NOT INCLUDED ON CACM TP REQUEST LIST, WHERE THERE WOULD BE A POSSIBILITY TO CONSIDER AN MFN TARIFF REDUCTION WHICH WOULD NOT BE SUBJECT TO COMPETITIVE NEED LIMITATIONS.

8. AMBASSADOR YEUTTER OBSERVED THAT FOR GATT TO CONTINUE TO BE A VIABLE INSTITUTION, IT SHOULD INCLUDE AS MEMBERS ALL COUNTRIES WITH INTERESTS IN FOREIGN TRADE. HE NOTED THAT THE GATT RULES COULD, AND PROBABLY WOULD, BE ALTERED IN THE MTN TO PROVIDE AN INCENTIVE FOR ALL COUNTRIES TO BELONG.

9. AMBASSADOR YEUTTER SUGGESTED CACM DELS CONTINUE TO SEEK MARKET ACCESS FOR PRODUCTS IN WHICH THEY ARE PARTICULARLY UNCLASSIFIED

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INTERESTED--NOT ONLY IN THE GSP PROGRAM, BUT ALSO IN TROPICAL PRODUCTS AND IN THE TARIFFS GROUP WHERE PERMANENT BENEFITS CAN BE OBTAINED. HE NOTED THAT SOME OF THE PRODUCTS ON WHICH CACM COUNTRIES WERE SEEKING REDUCTIONS WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR U.S. AND WOULD REQUIRE SUBSTANTIAL CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PRINCIPAL SUPPLIERS.

10. COSTA RICAN DEL NOTED THEY WOULD PRESENT THEIR DOCUMENTS ON TP NEGOTIATIONS IN GENEVA AND CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS. HE AGAIN NOTED CACM DIFFICULTY OF HAVING TO GET APPROVAL FROM FIVE CONGRESSES IN ORDER TO MODIFY CXT, AND THAT TO DO THIS THE GOVERNMENTS WOULD NEED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THEY WERE OBTAINING CONCESSIONS ON PRODUCTS OF INTEREST. HE MENTIONED THE NECESSITY OF HAVING A MECHANISM IN WHICH THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE U.S. AND CACM COULD BE CONTINUED AS HE FELT THE PRESENT MEETING TO BE INTERESTING AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

11. CACM DELS THEN PRESENTED U.S. DEL WITH LIST OF TEN QUESTIONS ON WHICH THEY SOUGHT SPECIFIC ANSWERS. QUESTIONS AND SUMMARY REPLIES WERE AS FOLLOWS:

(A) HOW DOES THE U.S. INTERPRET PARAGRAPH 5 OF THE TOKYO DECLARATION REFERRING TO LDC RECIPROCITY? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER NOTED THAT U.S. WOULD BE SEVERELY CONSTRICTED IN BENEFITS THAT IT COULD PROVIDE FOR LDCS IN THE MTN IF LDCS COULD MAKE NO CONTRIBUTIONS IN RETURN. HE NOTED THAT PRINCIPAL CONTRIBUTIONS, HOWEVER, WOULD BE EXPECTED FROM MOST ADVANCED LDCS, SUCH AS BRAZIL, MEXICO AND ARGENTINA, WHO WOULD PRESUMABLY BENEFIT MOST FROM TRADE LIBERALIZATION.

(B) WHAT WAS THE METHODOLOGY USED BY THE U.S. TO DIFFERENTIATE LEVELS OF DEVELOPMENT IN FORMULATING ITS REQUESTS

FOR CONTRIBUTIONS? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER NOTED THAT U.S. HAD NOT SOUGHT TO DEVELOP A DEFINITIVE MATHEMATICAL BASIS FOR ITS REQUESTS, BUT HAD SIMPLY SOUGHT A LARGER DEGREE OF RECIPROCITY FROM THE MORE ADVANCED LDCS. U.S. WAS, HOWEVER, WILLING TO NEGOTIATE AND WAS SEEKING THE OPINIONS OF THE COUNTRIES INVOLVED.

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(C) WHAT IS THE POLICY THAT U.S. IS THINKING OF ADOPTING TO COMPLY WITH S&D IN FAVOR OF THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN ALL PHASES OF THE NEGOTIATION? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED PROPOSALS FOR S&D IN THE VARIOUS MTN GROUPS.

(D) WHAT ARE THE MEASURES THAT THE U.S. HAS THOUGHT OF IN ORDER TO IMPROVE AND MAINTAIN ITS GSP? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER OBSERVED THAT U.S.-GSP WAS A RELATIVELY NEW DEVELOPMENT, AND MORE EXPERIENCE WAS NEEDED TO EVALUATE ITS EFFECTS. HOWEVER, THE U.S. WOULD FULLY REVIEW THE PROGRAM AT LEAST EVERY SIX MONTHS IN AN EFFORT TO IMPROVE IT. WE WILL BE PLEASED TO ENTERTAIN THEIR SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT ANY TIME.

(E) IF THE U.S. TARIFF FORMULA IS AGREED UPON, WHAT WOULD BE THE ADVANTAGES FOR THE AGRICULTURAL AND TROPICAL PRODUCTS THAT PRESENTLY DO NOT FIGURE WITHIN THE U.S. TP OFFER? IN ADDITION, WHAT KINDS OF PRODUCTS WOULD BE EXCEPTED FROM THE TARIFF FORMULA? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER DESCRIBED U.S. THINKING ON NEGOTIATIONS IN TARIFF GROUP, NOTING THAT U.S. WAS SEEKING AS SHORT A LIST OF EXCEPTIONS AS POSSIBLE.

(F) WOULD THE U.S. AGREE NOT TO APPLY SAFEGUARD ACTIONS TO LDCS? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER NOTED THAT COMPLETE EXCEPTIONS OF ALL LDCS FROM SAFEGUARD ACTIONS WOULD NOT BE POSSIBLE, ALTHOUGH THE U.S. COULD CONSIDER SELECTING DIFFERENT HISTORICAL BASES FOR LDC PRODUCTS WHICH MIGHT BE INCLUDED IN SAFEGUARD ACTIONS, AND RESERVING A PART OF ANY SAFEGUARD QUOTA FOR LDCS.

(G) WHAT IS THE U.S. POSITION ON SUBSIDIES AND COUNTERVAILING DUTIES? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED U.S. PROPOSAL, NOTING POSSIBILITY FOR S&D FOR LDCS.

(H) WHAT WILL BE THE MEASURES THAT THE U.S. WILL APPLY TO ELIMINATE NTBS ON TPS OF INTEREST TO CACM? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER NOTED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WERE UNDERWAY IN NTB GROUPS WHICH PRESENTLY APPEAR TO BE MOST APPROPRIATE PLACE TO CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS, MANY OF THE NTMS NOTI-
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FIELD BY LDCS HAVE BEEN CLARIFIED AND NOTIFICATIONS FOUND UNWARRANTED.

(I) CAN THE U.S. SUPPORT THE CACM POSITION THAT CERTAIN AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS BE NEGOTIATED IN THE TP GROUP, SUCH AS SUGAR, TOBACCO, HONEY AND COTTON? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER NOTED THAT PRODUCTS IN WHICH THERE WAS SUBSTANTIAL DC TRADE WOULD PRESUMABLY HAVE TO BE DEALT WITH IN AN MTN FORUM IN

WHICH ALL INTERESTED COUNTRIES PARTICIPATED, THIS WAS NOT THE CASE IN THE TP GROUP IN WHICH DCS WERE NOT NEGOTIATING WITH EACH OTHER.

(J) WHAT MEASURES DOES THE U.S. PLAN TO ADOPT IN ORDER TO REFORM THE GENERAL AGREEMENT OF GATT, AND WITHIN THESE, POINT OUT THE BENEFITS FOR THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES? AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED STATUS OF BRAZILIAN PROPOSAL FOR FRAMEWORK IMPROVEMENT GROUP, NOTING POSSIBILITY THAT IF AGREEMENT ON GROUP CAN BE REACHED, THAT A SPECIAL TNC FOR THIS PURPOSE MIGHT BE HELD IN GENEVA IN OCTOBER OR NOVEMBER.

12. CACM DELS EXPRESSED THEIR SINCERE APPRECIATION FOR FRANK AND FULL EXPLANATIONS GIVEN BY AMBASSADOR YEUTTER. MEETING THEN ADJOURNED SO THAT SEPARATE BILATERALS COULD BE HELD WITH DELEGATIONS FROM NICARAGUA, EL SALVADOR AND COSTA RICA.

13. ALL THREE COUNTRIES WERE PRIMARILY INTERESTED IN POSSIBILITY OF INCREASE IN VOLUNTARY RESTRAINT LEVEL ON MEAT EXPORTS TO THE U.S. DURING THE REMAINDER OF 1976. HONDURAS AND NICARAGUA CITED CIRCUMSTANCES ATTENDANT TO NATURAL DISORDERS, HURRICANES AND EARTHQUAKES, RESPECTIVELY, AS REDUCING HISTORICAL BASE USED TO CALCULATE RESTRAINT LEVEL. COSTA RICANS INDICATED THAT A "SUBSTANTIAL" QUANTITY OF ITS MEAT SHIPMENTS ARE ACTUALLY REEXPORTED TO THE CARIBBEAN THROUGH MIAMI, ALTHOUGH NOT ORIGINALLY ENTERED IN BOND. AMBASSADOR YEUTTER REVIEWED SITUATION OF U.S. CATTLE INDUSTRY AND NOTED THAT ALMOST NO POSSIBILITY EXISTS FOR AN INCREASE IN RESTRAINT LEVELS DURING THE REMAINDER OF 1976. ANY INCREASED LEVEL OF SHIPMENTS THIS YEAR WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY TRIGGER THE IMPOSITION OF QUOTAS, AND NO UNCLASSIFIED

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SIGNIFICANT SHORTFALL IS EXPECTED FOR REALLOCATION. HE DID SUGGEST THAT BOTH U.S. PRICE AND IMPORT DEMAND WERE LIKELY TO INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY IN 1978 AND POSSIBLY AS EARLY AS 1977. COSTA RICA AND HONDURAS OFFICIALS INDICATED THAT, IN AN EFFORT TO AVOID TRAUMATIC EFFECT ON LOCAL PACKING INDUSTRIES AND EMPLOYMENT, THEY ARE CONSIDERING THE POSSIBILITY OF ADDITIONAL SHIPMENTS IN BOND TO BE COUNTED AGAINST 1977 RESTRIANT LEVELS.

14. IN ADDITION TO THE MEAT ISSUE COSTA RICA ALSO REITER-
ATED ITS CONCERN OVER POSSIBLE U.S. ENACTMENT OF A BILL,
REPORTED FAVORABLY OUT OF HOUSE COMMITTEE, EXCLUDING TEXTILE
FROM ELIGIBILITY FOR DUTY EXEMPTIONS UNDER TSUS 807.
AMBASSADOR YEUTTER RESPONDED BY POINTING OUT THAT IT WAS
UNLIKELY THAT SUCH LEGISLATION WOULD BE PASSED IN THE FEW

REMAINING DAYS OF THIS CONGRESS. NICARAGUA DELIVERED A
FORMAL DOCUMENT OUTLINING SUGGESTED CHANGES IN GSP LEGIS-
LATION AND PRODUCT COVERAGE. ROBINSON

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<< END OF DOCUMENT >>

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